

1 Kings 11

Solomon's Great Failures

Lesson 7

Solomon's control of the international economy led Israel to experience a true golden age. God had blessed Solomon with not only the wisdom he had asked for but wealth and fame as well. In spite of all this, or perhaps because of it, Solomon ultimately failed as God's king.

Solomon's Personal Life

1. God had given His word regarding kings long before Israel had its first one in Deuteronomy 17:16 & 17. *"The king must not acquire great numbers of horses for himself or make the people return to Egypt to get more of them, for the LORD has told you, 'You are not to go back that way again.' He must not take many wives, or his heart will be led astray..."* In both 1 Kings 10 and 2 Chronicles 9, the writers make it very clear when a king did have horses and wealth it was a gift from the Lord. 1 Kings 11:1 opens with the word, *"however."* What was the situation?
2. Prior to Israel's entering the Promised Land God had warned them not to be involved with the Canaanites. What did He say through Moses in Exodus 34:15 & 16?
 - And, through Joshua in Joshua 23:12, 13?
3. What was wise King Solomon's response to God's warnings? (vs. 2)
4. How many did Solomon "love"? (vs. 3)
5. What happened as Solomon grew older? (vs. 4,5)
6. Throughout the books of Kings and Chronicles, all kings of the united kingdom of Israel and later the kingdom of Judah were compared to David. Solomon became the first king of whom we read *"So Solomon did evil in the eyes of the Lord..."* (vs. 6) From verses 6 through 8, how did this happen?

Note: The gods and goddesses Solomon worshiped as favors to his wives represented the decadence of Canaanite culture that had provoked God's holy war against it in the days of Joshua. Ashtoreth was the Canaanite goddess of fertility whose worship involved not only sexual rites, but astrology. The worship of Milcom or Molech included human sacrifices, especially of children. The worship of Chemosh was equally cruel and also centered in astrology.

The writer of 2 Chronicles omitted the account of Solomon's involvement into idolatry and its consequences because Chronicles was written to people who were already experiencing their own consequences for idolatry (loss of many lives, freedom and their land). The books of the Kings were written much earlier and were still looking forward to a successful future in their land.

7. When God appeared to Solomon a third time, what did He say would be the result of Solomon's apostasy (defection/turning away from God)? (vs. 9-13)

Solomon's Adversaries

8. Although God promised not to take the kingdom away from Solomon, He made life very difficult by raising up adversaries. The first one mentioned was Hadad. Who was he and what was his grudge? (vs. 14-20)

9. What recorded event spurred Hadad into action? (vs. 21, 22)

10. Who was the second adversary God raised up and what is said about him? (vs. 23-25)

11. Next came Jeroboam, who was he? (vs. 26)

12. What position did he hold in Solomon's court and why? (vs. 27, 28)

13. An event took place in Jeroboam's life that shaped his future. Please describe what happened according to 1 Kings 11:29, 30.

14. One can only imagine what Jeroboam was thinking as he watched his new cloak being torn into pieces. Why did Ahijah say he did that and what was Jeroboam to do? (vs. 31)

15. But because of God's promise to David, what did God say He would still do for the House of David and why? (vs. 32, 34-36)

16. Once again the writer reminds us of why God said He was about to do this. Why? (vs. 33)

17. What else did God say to Jeroboam through Ahijah? (vs. 37, 38)

18. God said this was to "humble David's descendants ... but not forever." How did King Solomon react to the news? (vs. 40)

19. The death of King Solomon is recorded in 1 Kings 11:41-43. How does it sum up his reign?

Think about it!

Solomon started out so well. In humility he asked for wisdom so he could rule God's people rightly. God not only answered that request but included wealth and fame as His gift. Solomon recognized this as coming from the Lord and early on, acknowledged God as Lord of his life and by faith Solomon walked in the ways of the Lord. But as time moved on, Solomon got caught up with his own importance and turned away from the Lord failing to live up to the responsibilities and gifts the Lord had placed in his care.

Though you and I will never be as rich and famous as Solomon, we also have been given spiritual gifts from the Lord along with the responsibility to use them for His kingdom. Do we acknowledge God as the giver of all? Do we make Him Lord of our lives, walking in His ways? Do we use the spiritual gifts we've been given as He intended them to be used?

It is my prayer that the words recorded by the apostle Paul at the end of his life, rather than the words about Solomon, will reflect your life and mine. *"I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith."* 2 Timothy 4:7